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The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretation of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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The three essentials of life are bread, beauty, and brotherhood.—Edwain Markham.

WHOLE NO. 1321 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 1936 | FRANK MORRISON, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 26, NO. 32

President Green Declares That Democratic Rule in the A. F. of L. Is Real Issue in Controversy With Industrial Organization Group

Tells National Press Club That Both Craft and Industrial Unions Are Chartered by the Federation, and That Consequently Organizational Forms Are Not the Question in Dispute—Stresses Fact that A. F. of L. Policies Formed in Conventions Are the Supreme Law Which Affiliated Organizations Must Observe—Holds the C. I. O. Was Organized To Apply a Policy Which the 1935 Convention Disapproved.

"The Issue Is Majority Rule Against Minority Rule," He Asserts—"Shall the American Federation of Labor Rest Surely and Securely Upon the Principles of Democracy, Democratic Rule and Majority Control, or Shall We Tolerate an Organization Within It Organized For the Avowed Purpose of Putting Into Effect a Minority Report That Was Lost By a Decisive Vote in the Convention of the American Federation of Labor?"

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington, D. C.—William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in an address before the National Press Club here, warned that the basic principle underlying the establishment and activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization is the destruction of democratic procedure and majority rule in the government of the American Federation of Labor.

He said there was absolutely no truthful foundation for the claim set up by the C. I. O. that the issue is craft unionism vs. industrial unionism. He pointed out that the A. F. of L. had in fact chartered a number of industrial unions, including the United Mine Workers of America, and asserted that in the mass production industries the Federation "will apply the industrial form of organization in the broadest and most comprehensive and constructive manner possible."

Turning to the government of the American Federation of Labor, Mr. Green explained that its policies are democratically laid down by the annual conventions of the Federation and that every decision is reached by the principle of majority rule.

He charged that the Committee for Industrial Organization was established to destroy the organization policy which the 1935 convention of the Federation adopted by a large majority, and held that the basic question before the Federation and its Executive Council is not forms of organization but the preservation of democratic procedure and majority rule which have always been its fundamental principles.

Mr. Green cited the last address made by Samuel Gompers before his death in 1924 urging the continuance of the principle of voluntarism in the labor movement as an essential element of human liberty, and declared he would not "betray the trust" imposed on him by President Gompers "or cast a reflection upon this great message."

The text of Mr. Green's address follows:

Mr. Chairman, fellow members of the National Press Club, and friends:

I appreciate very much this opportunity of being your guest and enjoying your hospitality. If in the brief address I deliver I may make some contribution toward your understanding of the controversy now existing within the ranks of the American Federation of Labor, and of the very difficult problems we are compelled to deal with almost constantly, I shall feel increasingly happy because I accepted your invitation to be your guest today.

Importance of A. F. of L.

It is indeed a pleasure to present to an audience of this kind such facts and information as I have in mind today. You are an intelligent body of men, consequently I cannot believe your minds are closed to whatever the facts may be. I rather think you are seeking the truth, an understanding of the facts, and it is upon that premise that I shall base my remarks.

The American Federation of Labor had its beginning in 1881. It was formally established in 1886. It has functioned and served labor without interruption during all the period intervening between 1886 and the present date. I think I can properly claim that it is now a part of the institutions of our Nation.

An organization such as the American Federation of Labor could not be established and live for more than half a century without, during that time, becoming deeply imbedded in the economical and institutional life of America. Its ramifications reach into every community, village, city and state. Its progress is based upon the best counsel and advice of those who have been connected with it through the development and growth of its organizational structure.

Serves the Workers

Obviously, it must depend for its success upon service to the workers, upon the loyalty and devotion of those who are associated with it, and the sympathetic help of its friends. Its strength lies in the development of the economic strength of the workers. It is strong in proportion as it may unite and solidify and develop the economic strength of the working men and women who become associated with it. And just in proportion as it is forced to engage in family quarrels and internal dissension it becomes weakened.

The economic strength which it possesses is an intangible strength. It cannot, in serving working men and women of the Nation, rely upon strong financial institutions or upon the accumulation of material wealth. It cannot depend upon those things for its existence. It must rely upon the loyalty and devotion of working men and women who are associated with the American Federation of Labor.

Weakened by Dissension

For that reason, you can understand how dissension of the kind now existing within the American Federation of Labor weakens the organization itself, strikes a vital blow, or, at least, a severe blow at the very economic heart of the movement. And for that reason a great injury is done to all working men and women when such dissension and discord arise within the ranks of labor.

Perhaps you can better understand what I mean when I say that during the course of time men and women associated with the American Federation of Labor have religiously devoted to it. The trade union movement becomes a religion to them. They sacrifice for it. They give their all for it. Many have made the supreme sacrifice in support and defense of the American Federation of Labor.

When we contemplate those facts and take into account the intelligence, the honesty, the devotion of men and women who regard the movement as a religion itself, we become deeply conscious of the great injury inflicted upon it when dissension and discord for any reason whatever take place within the ranks of organized labor.

Misunderstanding of Facts

And it is for that reason that I am deeply concerned at the moment over the controversy that now exists within the ranks of labor, over the dissension which has been created, over the split which has occurred and over the threat to the future as we face it.

I am deeply concerned because of the dissension existing within the ranks of organized labor. I would go to the extreme limit in order to heal the breach, to bind up the wounds, to unite the forces, because I am deeply conscious of the significance of the situation, of the injury that may be done to organized labor through a continuance of the ever-widening breach and of the threat to destroy the solidarity and unity of our great organized labor movement.

Now, what are the facts? May I dwell upon them for just a few moments in a temperate way? There seems to be an almost wilful misunderstanding of the real cause of the dissension existing within the ranks of organized labor, and I wish that within the next few moments I might make clear to you the real reason for the dissension and the basis of it.

Form of Organization

I know it is commonly stated that it is a disagreement over the organizational course that labor in America ought to be pursued by the American Federation of Labor. I want to disabuse your minds of that impression. That is not true. It is not a question of the industrial union or the craft union, and if I had the power of Providence himself I would place upon that statement all the emphasis I possess. That is not the issue.

The men and women of the organized labor movement will defend both. I would religiously stand with my colleagues by my side defending the economic philosophy of those who believe in the industrial form of organization.

On the other hand, I will stand by those who are members of the American Federation of Labor, who have always been identified with it, and defend with all the power and persuasiveness I possess the craft form of organization. We have found from experience that there is room for both within the American Federation of Labor for the application of both plans. We have applied them both. That is the best answer. We are applying them both.

Democratic Procedure Is the Issue

If that is the case, then what is the issue? I will tell you.

The real issue, my friends is this: Shall the American Federation of Labor, the organized labor movement of America, follow democratic procedure? Shall the movement be governed by majority rule? Shall the will of the majority of the membership of organized labor be the supreme law of the American Federation of Labor? That is the issue.

At the Atlantic City convention the sovereign representatives of labor of the United States and Canada met. They were clothed with authority to speak for the working people who hold membership in the American Federation of Labor.

There may be those who question the mental attitude of these representatives or, at least, some of them. They were chosen to represent their constituents in the American Federation of Labor convention upon questions considered and acted upon. But that does not alter the facts. Men are men, responsible to their constituents; and if in the convention they betray the interests of their constituents and fail to represent them, the power that sent them there can keep them at home. They are never very far away from their constituency. They are always kept fairly close.

For example, I must submit my candidacy to those sovereign representatives every year, not every two years, but every year. And so it is with the chosen representatives elected by the membership to represent them in the convention.

Ruled by Majority

Now, in the convention, which is the supreme authority within the American Federation of Labor, policies are formulated and drafted, adopted or rejected. The American Federation of Labor is an open forum. There is no more democratic institution in the land than the American Federation of Labor.

I wish that all of you might sit in when a convention of the American Federation of Labor is in session, witness the delegates in action, listen to the arguments presented pro and con upon the various proposals submitted for consideration, and the decision of the convention thereon.

That decision is the decision of a convention of the American Federation of Labor. There is no appeal from it. It is the Supreme Court of Labor, the highest tribunal, the court of last resort, the place where the laws of the American Federation of Labor are formulated and adopted, where policies that the Executive Council is commanded to carry out are formulated and adopted.

Isn't that democratic procedure? Isn't that majority rule? Isn't that in keeping with the spirit and the letter of our great democratic America?

What better way can be offered? Who can suggest a better plan? Shall it be minority rule, or shall the majority be the governing body of Labor's democratic movement? The only alternative for majority rule is force, the law of the jungle, the survival of the fittest. No great institution can hope for it to be governed by a minority or by factions, by those who disagree, individually or collectively, with a majority decision or majority rule.

Convention Determined Policy

At the Atlantic City convention the question of organizational policy was submitted. The committee chosen by the convention met, and those in favor or against one policy and opposed to or in favor of another appeared and presented their views to the committee. Resolutions were offered and these resolutions were considered by the convention committee.

Finally, after mature deliberation, after every delegate had been given an opportunity to present his views in support of or against resolutions considered, the committee made its report. That report was submitted to the convention, the supreme power, and then, after the widest and most comprehensive discussion of the subject, a decision was reached. The decision was reached after deliberate and judicious consideration by the delegates in attendance at the convention. The organizational policy for the American Federation of Labor during the year 1936 was adopted by a vote of 18,000 for to 10,000 against.

Executive Council Applies Convention Decision

Now, did the decision of the majority or of the minority become binding and obligatory upon the Executive Council and upon the American Federation of Labor? There is only one answer to that. Friend and foe must make the same answer.

That answer must be that the decision of the majority became the law of the American Federation of Labor. It is binding and obligatory upon every loyal and devoted member of the American Federation of Labor, particularly those who participated in the proceedings of the convention and by such participation submitted the issue for determination.

If any change is to be made in that policy it must be made by the same authority that adopted it. Otherwise, there will be chaos, we have disorder, no institution, I repeat, can live and survive under such a plan and procedure.

C. I. O. Organizes Against Majority Decision

Now, for some reason which I cannot understand, a group who I think erred in their judgment formed an organization within the American Federation of Labor called the Committee for Industrial Organization. That organization was formed following the adjournment of the Atlantic City convention. In the first official document issued by that organization, officered, formed and financed, you will find this declaration:

"This organization is formed for the purpose of putting into effect the minority report of the Atlantic City convention."

There is the purpose, well defined and well stated. In the light of that declaration, can there be any misunderstanding as to what is the issue?

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor clothed with authority, commanded, if you please, by the body that created it, to carry into effect the decision of the majority of the delegates in attendance at the convention, is now faced with a new organization within the American Federation of Labor, organized for the avowed purpose of carrying into effect the minority report of the Atlantic City convention.

Democratic Rule, Majority Control

There is the issue. The issue is majority rule against minority rule. Shall the American Federation of Labor rest surely and securely upon the principles of democracy, democratic rule and majority control, or shall we tolerate an organization within it, organized for the avowed purpose of putting into effect a minority report that was lost by a decisive vote in the convention of the American Federation of Labor?

Shall force or reason govern in the administration of the affairs of the American Federation of Labor?

There can be but one authority in a democratic institution. We cannot have two governments in the United States. We cannot have two governing bodies in this great labor movement. We cannot have two governing bodies in Congress. We accept majority rule in the election of those who make our laws and those who execute them. We refuse to yield or surrender to a minority.

Fallacy of C. I. O. Principle

I have repeatedly said, and I think it is worth while repeating now, that none of these organizations that make up this movement, the Committee for Industrial Organization, would tolerate for a single moment an organization within their organizations, such as now exists within the American Federation of Labor, a minority which constitutes a challenge to the supremacy of the authority of their national unions.

For that reason they themselves could not and would not tolerate for a single moment the existence of a divided organization within their own organization, an organization that constantly stands as a menace to our welfare and as a challenge to constituted authority.

Last Message of Gompers Cited

When President Gompers stood at the threshold of eternity itself, it seemed that he looked across the river onto the other side.

When he delivered his last message to the American Federation of Labor he said some things that made a lasting impression upon my mind. He stressed the importance and power and influence of voluntary action and democratic control.

They were the last words I ever heard him utter in a convention of the American Federation of Labor. Soon after he delivered this message he passed away in San Antonio, Texas.

I want to read to you some quotations from this last address of the great philosopher of the American labor movement.

Mr. Gompers speaking:

> "So long as we have held fast to voluntary principles and have been actuated and inspired by the spirit of service, we have sustained our forward progress and have made our labor movement something to be respected and accorded a place in the councils of our Republic. Where we have blundered into trying to force a policy or a decision, even though we felt right, we have impeded, if not interrupted, the realization of our own aims."

> "Men and women of our American trade union movement, I feel that I have earned the right to talk plainly with you."

> "I believe, if ever man ever did, it was Samuel Gompers.

> "As the only delegate to that first Pittsburgh convention who has stayed with the problems of our movement through to the present hour, as one who with clean hands and with singleness of purpose has tried to serve the labor movement honorably and in a spirit of consecration to the cause of humanity, I want to urge devotion to the fundamentals of human liberty—the principles of voluntarism.

> "No lasting gain has ever come from compulsion. If we seek to force, we but tear apart that which, united, is invincible. There is no room for strife in a labor movement may be assured sustained progress in determining its policies and methods other than sincere democratic deliberation until a unanimous decision is reached."

He put it stronger than I did.

> "This may seem a cumbrous, slow method to the impatient, but the impatient are more concerned for immediate triumph than for the education of constructive development."

Voluntarism Is Greatest Power

> "Unbounding patience, high-minded service, the compelling power of voluntarism have in America made what was but a rope of sand, a united, purposeful, integrated organization, potent for human welfare, material and spiritual. I have been with this movement since the beginning, for I have been given the privilege for service that has been accorded but few. Nor

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Ten Unions Face Suspension From The American Federation of Labor Unless They Withdraw From C. I. O.

Executive Council Holds Lewis Group Is a Dual Organization "Fomenting Insurrection" Within the A. F. Of L.—Acts of C. I. O. Are Held to "Constitute Rebellion Against the Administrative Policies" Adopted by Last Two A. F. of L. Conventions.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington, D. C.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, at the conclusion of a three-day session here, adopted a resolution declaring that ten affiliated unions shall "automatically stand suspended from the American Federation of Labor" unless they sever relations with the Committee for Industrial Organization, whose chairman is John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America. The unions were given until September 5 to make their decision.

The Council found that the Committee for Industrial Organization is a dual organization functioning within the American Federation of Labor and that its activities foment insurrection within the Federation and constitute rebellion against the Federation's administrative policies laid down by recent A. F. of L. conventions.

The Council decided that in functioning as members of the C. I. O. each of the ten unions violated the contract it made with the American Federation of Labor when it was granted a certificate of affiliation.

Unions Involved

The following unions were included in the suspension order:

United Mine Workers of America.

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

United Textile Workers of America.

Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers of America.

International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

Federation of Flat Glass Workers of America.

Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers.

International Union, United Automobile Workers of America.

United Rubber Workers of America.

The Executive Council reserved for special action two unions whose officers are affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization—the International Typographical Union and the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union.

The Council found that Charles P. Howard, president of the Typographical Union, held personal membership in the Committee for Industrial Organization, but that his union had not taken any action with respect to that group. In regard to the Hatters' Union, it was found that the millinery division, led by Max Zaritsky, was involved, but not the hatters' division, led by Michael F. Green.

President Green was instructed to communicate with these two unions for a clarification of their position regarding the connection of Mr. Howard and Mr. Zaritsky with the C. I. O.

Text of Council's Resolution

Following is the text of the resolution adopted by the Executive Council regarding the Committee for Industrial Organization:

"BE IT RESOLVED by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor in session in Washington, D. C., August 5, 1936:

"WHEREAS information in the form of formal charges was brought officially to the attention of the Executive Council by John P. Frey, President of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, on July 15, 1936, that twelve American Federation of Labor unions named in said charges had violated the Constitution and Laws of the American Federation of Labor by setting up a dual union called the Committee for Industrial Organization and by instituting a state of rebellion against the American Federation of Labor and hence had breached their contractual obligation in the charter or certificate of affiliation of each of said unions; and

"WHEREAS by direction of the Executive Council President Green of the American Federation of Labor transmitted on the 16th ultimo a copy of said charges to each of the twelve unions named therein, giving each union the opportunity to be heard in defense by the Executive Council in Washington on August 3, 1936, and informing each union of the penalties the Executive Council was authorized

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Industrial vs. Craft Unionism Is Not Involved in Controversy With the C. I. O., Says Green

A. F. of L. President Holds Action of Executive Council Ordering Ten Unions Suspended Unless They Withdraw From Lewis Group Was Taken Because the C. I. O. Is a Dual Organization Made Up of a Minority "Who Are in Open Rebellion Against Democratic Procedure and Majority Rule" Decreed by the Latest Conventions of the American Federation of Labor.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington, D. C.—A strong indictment of the activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization was made by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a statement announcing the decision of the A. F. of L. Executive Council that ten unions who are members of the Committee shall "automatically stand suspended from the American Federation of Labor" unless they announce their withdrawal from the C. I. O. "on or before September 5, 1936."

Mr. Green denied as false the widely spread sophistry that the controversy of the American Federation of Labor with the Committee for Industrial Organization is tied up with the question of industrial versus craft unions. The real issue, he said, is the preservation of democratic procedure instead of dictatorial methods in administering the affairs of the A. F. of L.

Following is the text of Mr. Green's statement:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor decided that the Committee for Industrial Organization is a dual organization and that its originator and leader is John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America.

"The decision was reached after the Executive Council had made a careful study of the charges filed by President Frey, of the Metal Trades Department, against the Committee for Industrial Organization and of the evidence offered in support thereof.

"This is the first attempt ever made, during the existence of the American Federation of Labor covering a period of more than fifty years, to set up a dual movement within it. It was the opinion of the Executive Council that it could not tolerate the setting up of a rival organization within the officially recognized family of organized labor or tolerate and countenance it without sacrificing its self-respect or making an unconditional surrender to a minority group composed of members who are in open rebellion to democratic procedure and majority rule, as exemplified at the latest convention of the American Federation of Labor.

"The decision of the Executive Council to suspend those organizations from affiliation with the American Federation of Labor which hold membership in the dual organization (the Committee for Industrial Organization) within 30 days unless they with-

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